

#E1-632
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February 22, 2004

3980 FM 2676
Hondo, Texas 78861

received
2/24/04

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Attention: Rini Ghosh

Re: Finance Docket No. 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

In response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, I am submitting the following to be considered in the formal scoping process.

I believe Vulcan's proposed quarry and the proposed SGR rail line, regardless of where the railroad is constructed, are connected actions, and should be studied in the same Environmental Impact Statement. The study should include direct impacts and alternatives to other projects, including no quarry and no rail line at all.

I, Judy Dittmar, as a concerned landowner along with my husband, and a Director of Medina County Environmental Action Association, would like to voice my fears of the Vulcan Materials proposed quarry and rail construction.

This proposed quarry and rail aims to destroy our peaceful community, as it is now, through air and water pollution and creating a deadly traffic situation. Many generations have been enjoying a peaceful rural life, and, new people have come here to escape just such environmental destruction as we are now facing.

My major concern is the possible contamination of the Edwards Aquifer. This is everyone's source of water including the ninth largest city in Texas, San Antonio. The proposed quarry sight is on the Aquifer. It's fuel storage, as indicated, is on the Aquifer, and the possible contamination from the rail cars is much too close to the Aquifer. There are caves, sink holes, fault line veins, etc., which can carry this contamination right into our water source.

I speak of my own farm where land use is concerned. We have a small farm. Our son, wife and new baby live on the farm in the approximately 70 year old home (I feel this is one of the two homes they mentioned being in path area of their proposed rail). We have tried to set up somewhat of a grass and grazing pattern, and even installed a pipeline for better distribution of grazing, as an attempt to prevent soil erosion and provide cleaner air. Our farm is very near the proposed quarry site and the beginning of the proposed rail which will cut right through the best part of the farm and within a few hundred feet of the house, waterwell, and pipeline. Cutting the farm as it does will mean starting over with our erosion control practices and this is far too expensive. A few hundred feet on the other side of the house is County Road 353, a dusty gravel road which will carry the traffic including over a hundred trucks a day to and from the proposed quarry loading area, headquarters, and designated delivery points. This will create a dangerous air pollution situation and also a dangerous entrance situation, not to mention the childrens' play area will be diminished to nothing. The same will be the case wherever this railroad goes.

There is mass travel on the two larger roadways to be crossed by the proposed surface rail (State Highway 2676 and County Road 4516). This travel will detain all concerned—fire trucks, ambulances, emergency law officers, school buses, and many, many people going to work to and from San Antonio and other area points. Contrary to what newspeople have reported (taken from people who do not live here), there is a tremendous amount of traffic on these roads. It is my understanding that county Road 4516 is being studied for a State Highway. Through the EIS and any other reports is the only way we can assure ourselves that all legal requirements will be met regarding the safety of people along this 7 mile rail and around the quarry site.

Flooding is a huge concern since we live in Quihi where two of the largest creeks meet. If the rail which runs almost entirely through the flood plain, is not constructed correctly, or the quarry is not designed correctly, we, about 35 historical sites and homes, church, cemeteries—all will be severely damaged by flood waters. We do not feel this is a chance that should be taken. In recent years we have been trapped in our home by floodwater—the first time in the 40 years we live here. You can see what would happen if water was diverted from quarry or blocked by the rail.

Wildlife must be protected. This is a reason for living in a rural area, and, hunting has also become in many cases including ours, a necessary form of income. We have the farm on CR353 and hunting property on FM2676 which can be leased for hunting.

Who am I to stop progress? This is one company's progress. To us it is disaster—a danger threat to the whole area. Why put a railroad through creeks and through the flood zone and historical area? Just move further east or west and have the same limestone and not endanger so many lives.

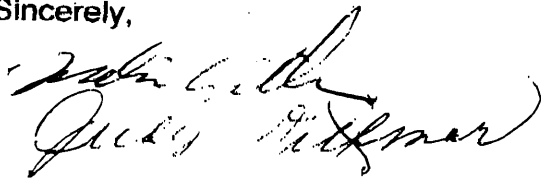
I do hope that our concerns, along with your newly required survey, will save us from this environmental and physical destruction. Following are a couple of additional points we would like to see covered by the EIS:

Vulcan Materials should show us how their seemingly threatening statement about 'all truck transport',
If rail is not built, would be financially feasible to them.

How Vulcan could ever, or can now, continue to plan this project when the Edwards Aquifer Protection

Plan states that 'MINING WILL BE WHOLLY PROHIBITED ON THE EDWARDS AQUIFER'.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Judy Dittmar".

Melvin and Judy Dittmar, Landowners
Judy Dittmar, Director, MCEAA

cc: U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla
U.S. Senator John Cornyn
Texas Senator Frank Madla
Medina County Judge Jim Barden
Medina County Commissioner Royce Hartmann